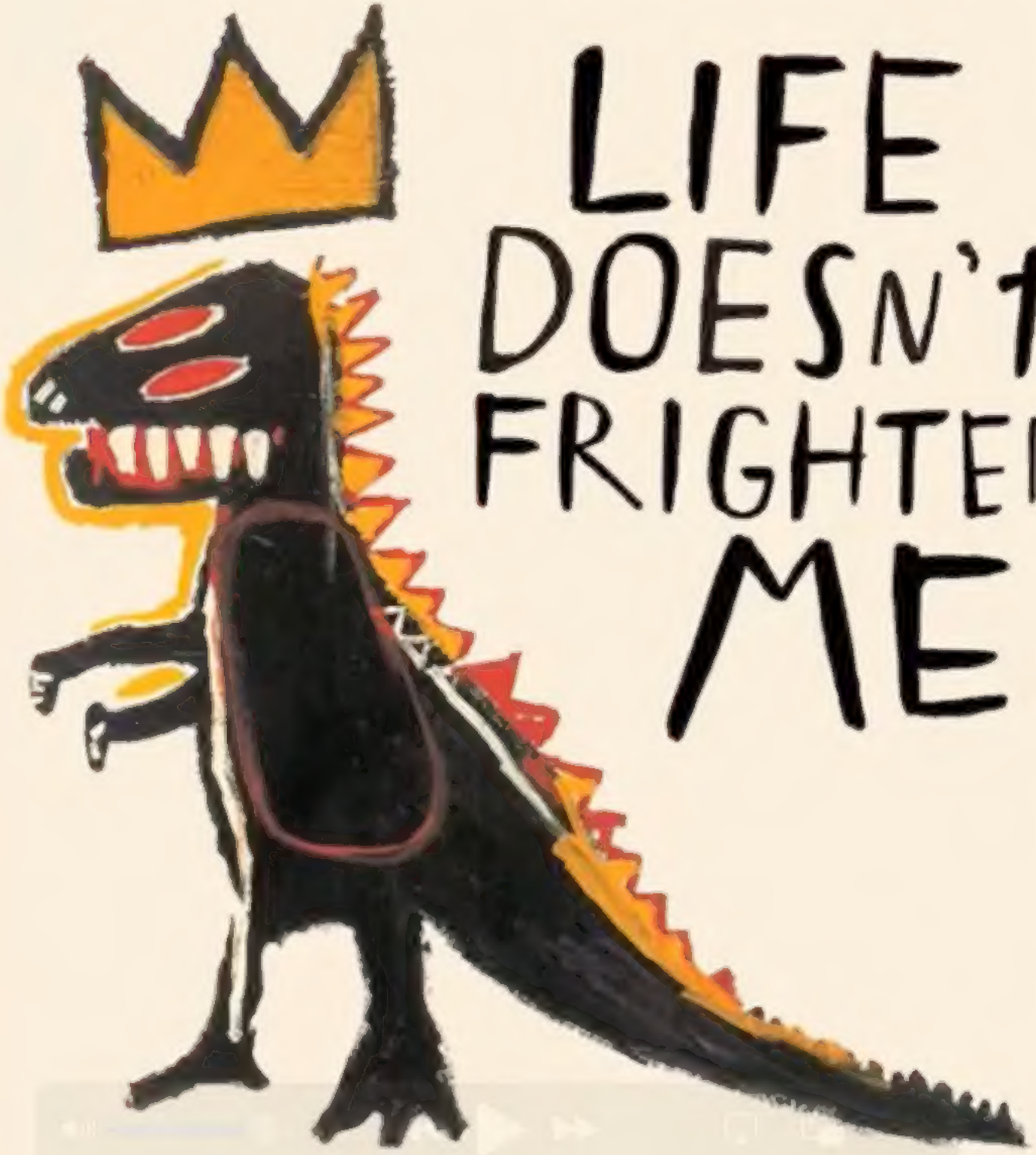
Poem by

MAYA ANGELOU



LIFE DOESN'T FRIGHTEN ME

Paintings by

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT

Edited by SARA JANE BOYERS

LIFE
DOESN'T
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ME

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Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition

ABRAMS BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS • NEW YORK

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall

LIFE

DOESN'T

FRIGHTEN

ME

AT ALL

Bad dogs barking loud

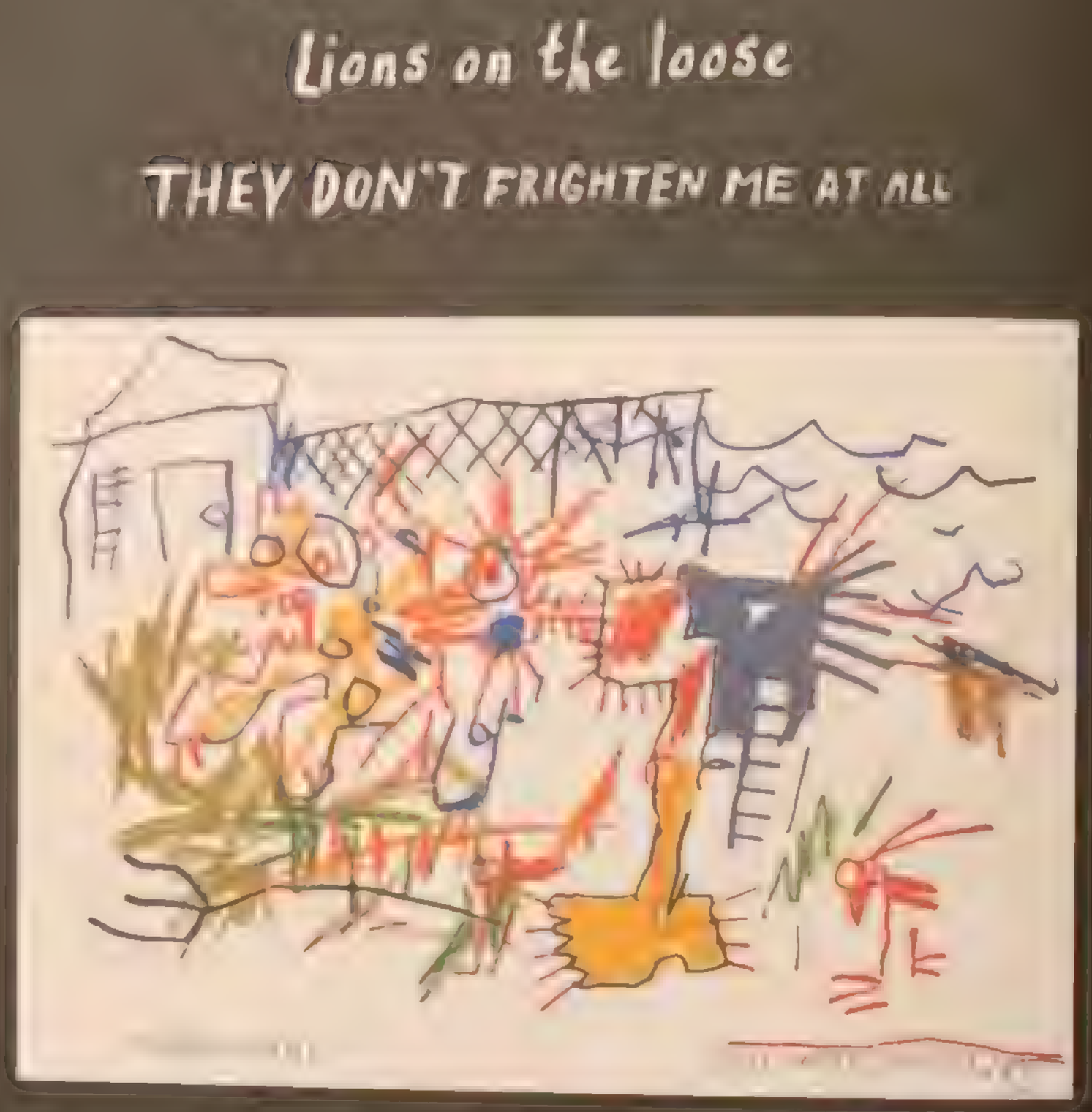
Big ghosts in a cloud

LIFE DOESN'T FRIGHTEN ME AT ALL.

Mean old Mother Goose

Lions on the loose

THEY DON'T FRIGHTEN ME AT ALL



Dragons breathing flame
On my counterpane

THAT DOESN'T FRIGHTEN ME AT ALL.

N

I go boo
Make them shoo
I make fun
Way they run
I won't cry
So they fly
I just smile
They go wild

LIFE DOESN'T
FRIGHTEN ME
AT ALL.

Tough guys in a fight
All alone at night
LIFE DOESN'T
FRIGHTEN ME
AT ALL.

Panthers in the park

Strangers in the dark

NO, THEY DON'T FRIGHTEN ME AT ALL.

That new classroom where
Boys all pull my hair
(Kissy little girls
With their hair in curls)

THEY DON'T FRIGHTEN ME AT ALL.

Don't show me the frogs and snakes
And listen for my scream,
If I'm afraid at all
It's only in my dreams.

I've got a magic charm

That I keep up my sleeve,

I can walk the ocean floor
And never have to breathe.

LIFE DOESN'T FRIGHTEN ME AT ALL

Not at all

Not at all.

LIFE
DOESN'T
FRIGHTEN
ME
AT ALL.

MAYA ANGELOU

[illegible] (1928–2014) was a poet, writer, performer, civil rights advocate, and professor whose words and deeds have made a lasting impression on American society.

Dr. Maya Angelou experienced a challenging early childhood, faced with her parents' separation and the ever-present cloud of racism. Yet, fortified by the nurturing support of her grandmother, mother, and brother, Angelou thrived.

For much of their early childhood years, Angelou and her older brother lived with their paternal grandmother in Stamps, Arkansas, where race relations had little improved since the Civil War. Against this turbulent backdrop, the children were raised in a proud, industrious family, led by their grandmother and steeped in the world of literature-

[illegible]

Following a traumatic assault at age [illegible], Angelou stopped speaking for five years. [illegible] said of that time, "I stopped talking, but I [illegible]

[illegible]

popular musical trend.

From 1959 to 1960, Dr. Angelou served [illegible] Northern Coordinator of Dr. Martin Luther [illegible] Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership [illegible]

activism spread worldwide, she traveled to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa where, in Ghana, she became the first female editor of an English-language newsweekly and later a professor at the University of Ghana. Returning to the United States in the late 1960s, she found the country in the midst of increasingly contrasting movements: the Black Nationalism promoted by Malcolm X and the nonviolent integration of Dr. King. A friend to both men, Dr. Angelou often acted as the philosophical bridge between them.

Dr. Angelou was named the first Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, a lifetime position she held for more than thirty years. Until her death in 2014, she wrote, lectured, protested, and performed passionately worldwide, advocating always for the rights of all to be exercised with perseverance and civility. Among her many accolades and accomplishments are Dr. Angelou's powerful poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," commissioned by President Bill Clinton for his inauguration, only the second poem ever so commissioned by a U.S. president; and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded to Dr. Angelou in 2011 by President Barack Obama.

With eloquence and immediacy, Maya Angelou has shared her own life story in a series of strong autobiographies, beginning with the acclaimed *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In all her work, she shares her passion and exuberance, her defeats and triumphs, so that all may feel her vitality, humor, and faith. Her advice, not only to writers but also to everyone: to read everything possible, be it African American, European, Latino, or other literature—but especially Shakespeare.

Life, she feels, is one's sole possession, and it certainly never frightened Maya Angelou.

Selected Bibliography of Maya Angelou's Books

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou. New York: Random House, 1994.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings. New York: Random House, 1969.

Letter to My Daughter. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2009.

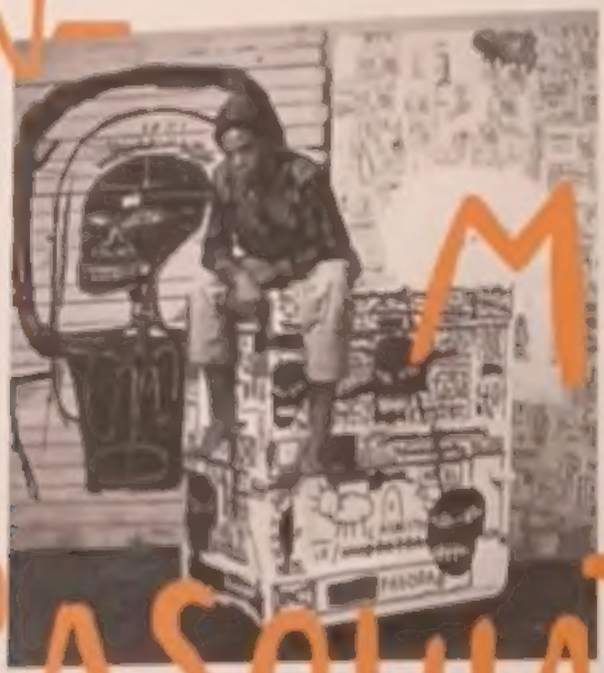
Mom & Me & Mom (1st ed.). New York: Random House, 2013.

On the Pulse of Morning. New York: Random House, 1993.

Selected Media

Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise. Documentary by Bob Hercules and Rita Coburn Whack for American Masters/PBS, 2016.

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT



Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988) grew up in Brooklyn, New York. His middle-class Haitian father and Puerto Rican mother introduced him to visual art, music, and theater as a young child.

From the age of four, Basquiat drew incessantly, forming his lifelong habit of filling notebooks with notes, lists, titles, poetry, short stories, cartoons, drawings, and music references of all sorts—the notebooks often becoming pieces of the artist's artwork themselves.

As a teenager, Basquiat left home to live in downtown Manhattan, sometimes on the streets and sometimes with friends, selling hand-painted postcards and T-shirts to support himself and his artwork. With a friend, he created the tag "SAMO©," drawing and lettering on building walls throughout lower Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Later, as Basquiat left SAMO© behind, his art continued to reflect influences of the city, as well as the African, French, and Latino-Caribbean traditions of his parents' homelands. He reintroduced body imagery to art, featuring black bodies that had rarely been shown in modern American art.

Anything and everything Basquiat encountered found its way into his art: words and images from television, film, politics, and sports; his collections of books—especially *Gray's Anatomy*, a gift from his mother as he convalesced from an early childhood accident; films, old photographs, rare toys; the music of jazz, rock, and hip-hop that he heard and played; and even photocopies of his own and other artists' works. He frequently repeated images, such as teeth, crowns, and arrows, and they soon became identified with his art.

The artist's powerful paintings and drawings, often imbued with poetic meaning, expressed a range of emotions, from humor to anger. Using unexpected media and materials, Basquiat became known for weaving together the rhythms and textures of the city, the techniques and traditions of the fine arts, and the cultures that so often inspired him. One of the first black artists to break through the racial barriers of the fine art world, Basquiat quickly rose to fame.

With his first one-person exhibition in 1982, the art world discovered Basquiat, drawing connections to many of the great artists of the first half of the twentieth century: Jean Dubuffet, Jasper Johns, Willem de Kooning, and especially Pablo Picasso.

Yet, as his career grew, Basquiat's complicated relationship with this fast fame did not always serve him well. And while he was proud of his growing renown and rejoiced with his family and friends, the pressures on him increased. After an accidental drug overdose, the artist tragically died at the young age of twenty-seven.

Today, Jean-Michel Basquiat is considered one of the greatest artists of the late twentieth century and is one of the most exhibited ever. The iconic symbolism of his work continues to resonate with the issues of contemporary society and inspires many in the worlds of art, culture, and fashion. Expressively bringing to the forefront complicated and multidimensional subjects, Basquiat's art depicts the world as he perceived it: diverse, funny, raucous, poetic, and potentially scary—but always real.

Selected Museum Collections of the Work of Jean-Michel Basquiat

Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona

The Broad, Los Angeles

Centre Pompidou, Paris

Daros Collection, Zurich

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain

Menil Collection, Houston

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal

Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco

Rubell Family Collection, Miami

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City

Selected Media

The Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat, by Fred Hoffman. Paris: Galerie Enrico Navarra, 2017.

Downtown 81. Feature film directed by Edo Bertoglio, written by Glenn O'Brien, produced by O'Brien and Maripol. Zeitgeist, 1981 (currently distributed by Music Box Films).

Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child. Documentary film directed by Tamra Davis. Arthouse Films/Curiously Bright Entertainment/LM Media, 2010.

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Praise for Life Doesn't Frighten Me

"A powerful exploration of emotion and its expression through the careful blend of words and art." —*School Library Journal*

"The proximity of Basquiat's edgy, streetwise pictures adds even greater power and authenticity to Angelou's refrain, 'Life doesn't frighten me at all.'" —*Publishers Weekly*

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall
Life doesn't frighten me at all

Maya Angelou's brave, defiant poem celebrates the courage within each of us. From the scary thought of panthers in the park to the unsettling scene of a new classroom, fearsome images are dispelled by the power of faith in ourselves.

Angelou's strong words are matched by the daring vision of artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose style reveals the powerful emotions and fanciful imaginings of childhood. Together, Angelou's words and Basquiat's paintings create a place where every child—indeed, every person—may experience and celebrate their own fearlessness.

MAYA ANGELOU was, among other things, a beloved poet, novelist, playwright, actress, dancer, professor, and civil rights activist. Angelou died in 2014 at the age of eighty-six.

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT was born in Brooklyn, New York, of Haitian and Puerto Rican parents. His work is exhibited at over a dozen museums across the globe. Basquiat died in 1988 at the age of twenty-seven.

SARA JANE BOYERS is a writer/editor, exhibiting fine art photographer, modern and contemporary art collector, and former music industry executive.

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